

# Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake: Creating a New Story of Urban Growth

**We are doing great things in Baltimore.** Despite our recent challenges, including our city's recent unrest, no one can deny that we have turned a corner. New families, new millennials, and new companies are increasingly choosing to make Baltimore their home. And more are choosing to stay. For the first time in decades, the city is growing. Since I put forth the goal of growing Baltimore by 10,000 families over 10 years, our city gained nearly 2,000 new residents, and the signs point toward that trend continuing.

Under my administration, Baltimore has achieved substantive results in areas that are critical to both the city's current residents and those considering making Baltimore their home.

Sincerely,  
Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake



## MAKING BALTIMORE SAFER

**Fighting Violent Crime:** In 2014, Baltimore experienced 211 homicides, a 10% decline and the second lowest number in a generation. Amid a surge of violence afflicting many of the nation's cities in 2015, Mayor Rawlings-Blake has pushed for police to launch innovative solutions, including unprecedented collaboration among federal, state and local law enforcement partners.

**Improving Community Trust:** Efforts to better train police officers on engaging with the public have driven citizen complaints alleging excessive force down 46%, and citizen complaints alleging police discourtesy are down 53%.

**Body Cameras:** Following the recommendations of a mayoral working group on body cameras, the Police Department is set to launch a pilot program to ensure the technology is implemented in a way that builds community trust while protecting the privacy rights of citizens. Body cameras will be issued to officers beginning in early 2016.

**Heroin Addiction and Overdoses:** Recommendations of Mayor Rawlings-Blake's Heroin Treatment and Prevention Task Force are being aggressively implemented to fight addictions and reduce overdose deaths.



## EXPANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH

**Investing in Recreation Centers:** Baltimore City's first newly constructed recreation center opened in nearly a decade in Morrell Park. Mayor Rawlings-Blake has a plan to spend more than \$136 million to build or upgrade 40 recreation centers across the center, funded by leveraging the sale proceeds of four downtown parking garages.

**Improved School Readiness and Outcomes:** Children enrolled in Head Start programs have improved their school readiness—up 11 percentage points in the past three years. Total enrollment in city schools has increased by more than 3,300 students in the past six years, and the dropout rate for the city schools has decreased by more than 50%. Baltimore City is home to 31 public charter schools, with four more opening in 2015. The total is more than the rest of Maryland combined.

**Building and Renovating Schools:** The most significant school construction effort in Baltimore's history has begun — a nearly \$1 billion investment in building new schools and renovating existing ones in neighborhoods across the city.

**Curfew:** With the approval of one of the nation's strictest curfew laws, Baltimore created daytime and nighttime Youth Connection Centers to both address truancy and provide supportive services to young people and their families.

**Youth Summer Jobs:** Mayor Rawlings-Blake and her OneBaltimore initiative helped create summer YouthWorks job placement opportunities for nearly 8,000 youths, including many through the Hire One program that actively recruits local businesses to create job opportunities for young people.



## CREATING JOB OPPORTUNITIES

**Lower Unemployment, More Jobs:** Over the past five years, Baltimore's unemployment rate has declined by more than a third, and the number of jobs in the city has increased by more than 12,000.

**Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy:** The strategic planning process by the Baltimore Development Corporation — the first in recent history — focuses on growing key sectors of Baltimore's economy while devoting more attention to empty storefronts and vacant buildings across the city.

**Small Businesses:** From the development of a Small Business and Entrepreneurship Plan to the launch of the BaltimoreMICRO program to assist small businesses with capital investment, Mayor Rawlings-Blake has helped small businesses flourish in neighborhoods across the city.

**Skills Training:** The closing of the Magna Center in Park Heights created an opportunity for a new Regional Skills Training Center, where the nationally recognized nonprofit organization JARC is offering advanced manufacturing skills training.



## INVESTING IN OUR NEIGHBOR- HOODS

**Vacants to Value:** In its nearly five years in operation, the Vacants to Value program has led to 3,000 vacant homes being demolished or rehabilitated, in large part by leveraging \$107 million in private investment.

**Apartment Tax Credit:** More than 3,200 new apartments are under construction in 2015 as a result of the apartment tax credit first approved in 2012 and later expanded in 2014.

**Minor Privilege Fees:** Many of the fees paid by small businesses for awnings or bike racks that extend into the public right-of-way were cut or eliminated, putting \$850,000 a year back into the pockets of small business owners.

**Eliminating Food Deserts:** After becoming the first city to hire a Food Policy Director, Baltimore opened a new supermarket in Howard Park, expanded its Virtual Supermarket program, and launched the Baltimore Healthy Stores program in West Baltimore.

**Increased Construction:** The number of permits for residential and non-residential construction and rehabilitation has increased by 15% in the past two years.

**Anchor Institutions:** The city signed a ground-breaking agreement with participating anchor health and higher education institutions to coordinate efforts to foster economic growth and development in Baltimore's neighborhoods.

**Welcoming City:** Baltimore is building a reputation as a welcoming city, through the creation of the Mayor's Office of Immigrant and Multicultural Affairs and release of the report "The Role of Immigrants in Growing Baltimore." The implementation of the 32 recommendations in the report will further strengthen Baltimore as a place of economic opportunity and inclusion.

"Three thousand vacant homes have been demolished or rehabilitated so far."



## MAKING A HEALTHIER CITY

**Reduced Infant Deaths:** The B'More for Health Babies Initiatives has helped produce a more than 50% decline in the city's infant mortality rate since 2009.

**Fewer Teen Births:** In the past five years, Baltimore has experienced a 32% decline in teen births.

**Senior Nutrition:** The city offers Eating Together Sites for seniors in 56 locations across Baltimore, with plans to open six more sites in 2015.

**Aggressive Heart Disease Intervention:** The Baltimore City Health Department's aggressive effort to screen and educate citizens about cardiovascular disease risks has helped create a nearly 25% decline in the rate of hospitalization for premature heart disease.

"Baltimore has been an innovator in many areas of public health, and we look forward to sharing our successes with the rest of Maryland and the nation."



## SUSTAINABLE BALTIMORE

**Trash Can Pilot Program:** A municipal trash can pilot program is producing positive cleanliness results and reductions in rat abatement calls in two neighborhoods. Mayor Rawlings-Blake will move ahead with providing a city trash can to every home by summer 2016.

**Energy Initiative:** With the help of a \$52 million grant from the Maryland Public Service Commission, Baltimore has launched a broad effort to expand and streamline energy conservation programs, including expanded outreach to neighborhoods and in-home installation services.

**Bike-Friendly Baltimore:** The city's Planning Commission approved the first new bike master plan in nearly a decade. An executive order was signed establishing a Mayor's Bike Advisory Commission.

**Rat Abatement:** A near doubling of the workers in the city's rat abatement program allowed implementation of a systemic, robust rat control strategy for neighborhoods, as opposed to simply responding to complaints.

**Alley-Sweeping:** The addition of mechanical alley sweepers to the city's fleet enables nearly a dozen neighborhoods to have their alleys swept each week.



## STRENGTHENING GOVERNMENT AND RESTORING PUBLIC TRUST

**Improved Credit Rating:** Standard & Poor's upgraded Baltimore's credit rating to AA. Coupled with the same rating from Moody's, this represents the highest combined rating from both agencies in more than 50 years. Over the long term, this saves millions of dollars on construction projects, like schools, roads, and recreation centers.

**10 Year Financial Plan:** The creation of a 10-year financial plan – including a reform of pensions for police officers and firefighters reduced the city's long-term structural deficit by 53 percent from the projection of \$745 million five years ago.

**Inspector General:** The budget for the Inspector General was doubled during the past five years as part of an enhanced effort to investigate and eliminate fraud and corruption within city government.

**Property Tax Reduction:** The city is nearly 14 cents into a plan to reduce the property tax rate for residential homeowners by 20 cents by the year 2020, the largest sustained property tax cut in the city's history.



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